

The 'Leadership' Question (1)



What is 'Leadership'?

Fintan O'Toole has been one of the keenest observers and an acute commentator on the characters of Johnson and Trump and how their characteristics have damaged the political fabric of two major democracies.

In his latest piece for *The Guardian* (<https://bit.ly/3yA7JeF>), O'Toole conveys the devastation by Johnson with, of course, the support of many who saw it as their duty to obey. (We should always remind ourselves of the point made by Hannah Arendt that "no one has the right to obey".)

Reading this prompts questioning of all those times we have heard Johnson described as a 'leader' or giving 'leadership' without *stopping* and thinking is that really so or are we being peddled nonsense? O'Toole's account of Johnson would suggest taking care it is not the latter.

Words matter – they govern *How We Think*. And the words 'leader' and 'leadership' are surely two of the most abused words in contemporary society, with many who have never demonstrated leadership and have no potential to do so being unthinkingly accorded the accolade of 'leader'.

When we *stop and think* about 'leadership', and ask ourselves the question what is 'leadership' and who has demonstrated it, what answer do we give ourselves?

If we are going to use these words and accept their use by others, does it not behove us to know what we mean when we use them and what others mean when they use them?

What thoughts are prompted for you when you hear someone using the word 'leadership'?

What do you think?

For more about what we do in The Keynes Centre keynes.ucc.ie, our work on leadership as well as our forthcoming book 'The Leadership Mind' <http://theleadershipmind.org/>, and to sign up to our newsletter at eepurl.com/bp_AI5.

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